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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the SecretaryGregory L. Archuleta  
1250 Golden Circle 510  
Golden, CO 80401

December 1, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

After 25 years of work with the American GI Forum, I have seen first hand the hardships that many Hispanic veterans faced upon completing their military service. We have come too far to allow the more than 110,000 Hispanic men and women currently serving in our Armed Forces to suffer similar inequities, especially as they defend our land at home and abroad. Forcing our military personnel – and their families – to pay more for the pre-paid calling cards they rely on is simply wrong. Thus I urge the FCC not to increase the cost of using prepaid calling card services by placing new charges and fees on these cards.


The fact that so many in our Armed Forces use pre-paid cards to connect with family members is reason enough not to implement additional charges and fees on calling cards; but for Hispanic servicemen and women, the effect would be even more far-reaching. Nationally, over 40% of Hispanic homes rely on prepaid cards, as do half of the households with low-income. Raising the prices for using the cards could quite literally sever the only connection between some Hispanic families and their loved ones serving our country by making the cost of a phone call too expensive.

The FCC should be making it more – not less – affordable for our troops to speak with their families, particularly while military families are managing tight budgets. But new charges and fees for prepaid calling cards will make it much more difficult for our soldiers to stay connected as prices would rise by as much 20%.

I urge you to support our fighting men and women by refusing to impose new fees and new burdens on our troops. Please keep them connected to the people for whom they fight

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Sincerely



Greg Archuletta  
Past National Vice Commander  
American GI Forum

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein